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The Coming Hague Conference.

It is reported from Washington that the President has decided to appoint Hon. Joseph H. Choate, ex-Ambassador to Great Britain, as Chairman of the United States delegation to the coming Hague Conference. The names of the other members of the delegation have not yet been given out. The President is reported to be giving much consideration to the selection, that those sent may be strong and capable men. Mr. Choate will make an able and practical chairman. If Andrew D. White's age and health would permit him to go again, we should all expect him to be chosen as the fittest man in the nation to head the delegation. But since this cannot be, the choice could not have fallen upon a better representative than Mr. Choate. He is one of the ablest lawyers in the country, has served us with distinguished ability at the Court of St. James, and is by nature and habit of thought thoroughly in sympathy with the great purposes of the peace movement. While in London he always used his influence towards a true and abiding friendship between that country and this, and would have done the same at the court of any other government to which he might have been sent.

The date of the meeting of the Conference has, so far as we know, not yet been announced. We doubt

if it has been fixed. The condition of affairs in Russia has made it most difficult for the Czar, to whom the assembling of the Conference has fallen, to make any serious preparation for it. It may on this account be delayed several months, though the general expectation is that it will meet sometime during the coming summer or autumn.

The interest felt in the Conference is extraordinarily widespread and strong, and great things are expected of it when it does meet. Not all that the most advanced friends of peace would like to see done will be accomplished by it, but there is every reason to believe that it will make a most momentous contribution to the work of the permanent organization and establishment of peaceful relations among the nations.

The subjects most talked of for the program of the Conference are, as our readers already know: (1) the protection of the rights of neutrals at sea in time of war; (2) provision for the codification of international law; (3) arrest and reduction of armaments; (4) the extension of the principle of neutralization to other states and waterways, including the great trade routes on the ocean; (5) the conclusion of a permanent general treaty of obligatory arbitration stipulating reference of disputes to the Hague Court; and (6) the establishment of an international assembly to meet periodically to deliberate on questions of general interest to the nations. Certain other matters are also proposed for discussion, but the above are the capital themes about which the interest of the Conference will centre, and make its deliberations and conclusions memorable in the history of the world.

The subject of greatest moment will be that of the creation of a regular International Congress, though arrest and reduction of armaments and a permanent general treaty of obligatory arbitration will be in the very front of the discussions. The Special Committee of the Interparliamentary Union, to whose meeting in Paris we referred last month, decided, as we stated, not to recommend the creation of an international legislature, as at the present time premature. But they did decide to recommend that the Hague Conference itself should be constituted by the governments into a permanent body which shall meet automatically and periodically. This is what we have for some time believed and suggested to be the most practicable course to take to reach the end desired, and now this great international body of statesmen has taken the thought up and will throw the weight

of its powerful influence in favor of it at The Hague. That will almost certainly assure its adoption.

This special Committee went further at Paris and decided to propose at The Hague that the Interparliamentary Union be reorganized so as to constitute a parliamentary official adjunct to the Hague Conference as a regular body, or a Lower House, representing the people through the parliaments as the other body will represent the governments. As this would make the scheme much more complex and difficult to bring into working order at the present time, we doubt very much if the Hague Conference can be induced to recommend it. But if the first part of the plan, which is perfectly simple and feasible, shall be adopted, the step of fate will have been taken, and that permanent and complete organization of the nations which is now demanded by so many of the larger interests of humanity will have taken another step even more momentous than that of setting up the Hague Tribunal. All the rest will follow in its time, and its time will not be far away.

The Nobel Peace Prize for 1905.

The Nobel Peace Prize for 1905 was awarded, on the 10th of December, to the Baroness Bertha von Suttner of Vienna, Austria. The ceremony took place in the new building of the Nobel Institute in Christiania, which was only recently completed and opened as the permanent headquarters of the work of the Committee of the Norwegian parliament, which has in charge the administration of the peace prize fund. The occasion was rendered the more noteworthy by the presence of the new king of Norway, Haakon, and Queen Maud, together with all the ministers of state, the members of the parliament and of the diplomatic corps.

The Baroness well deserves the recognition that has thus been given to her long-continued, self-sacrificing and eminently efficient services in the cause of peace. Though possessed of but small means, she has carried on for fifteen or sixteen years, her husband heartily coöperating with her as long as he lived, an incessant campaign through the European press, public lectures and private interviews in behalf of the noble ideas to which she has consecrated her talents and her high position. She has been a prominent figure in the Peace Congresses since 1891. She had large influence at The Hague during the Czar's Peace Conference in 1899. Her great story, "Lay Down Your Arms" (*Die Waffen Nieder*), has had an immense circulation, having gone through some thirty editions in German and a large number in the translations which have been made of it into foreign languages. A number of other books from her pen — "Schach der Qual," "The Peace Conference at The Hague," etc. — have also supported and extended the

fine humanitarian principles which lay at the foundation of her famous story.

The Baroness has been singularly fortunate in escaping criticism. Her zeal and courage in advocating the cause of peace have always been marked with good judgment and tact. Her public work has not lessened in the least her remarkable womanly reserve and delicacy of manner. Nor has her position in the nobility, which has given her unusual influence in the higher political circles of Europe, closed her way to effective labor among the common people wherever she has met and spoken to them; for she is thoroughly democratic in her conceptions and feelings, showing always the deepest sympathies with the people in their struggles and sufferings.

Her many friends in all countries are heartily glad that the Nobel Committee have seen their way this year to award her this great prize of nearly forty thousand dollars. Some of them have been surprised that the recognition has not come earlier, especially in view of the fact that it was through her influence with Mr. Nobel, in an interview at Paris some time before he died, that he was induced to devote a part of his immense fortune to the advancement of the cause of international peace.

The circumstances attending the annual bestowing of this prize bear testimony to the extraordinary progress which the peace cause has made in recent years, and the powerful hold which it now has upon the civilized world. We have alluded above to the presence of the King of Norway, the parliament, the state ministers and the foreign ministers at the ceremonies on the 10th ult. in the Nobel Institute. That in itself was highly significant. But it is still more remarkable that the civilized world takes such an extraordinary interest in the awarding of this prize. Four other Nobel prizes of the same amount are conferred at the same time each year by a Committee of the Swedish parliament, but if one may judge from the amount of space devoted to them in the press, the peace prize attracts more attention and awakens deeper interest than all the others combined. The other prizes deal with great sections of human knowledge and interest — physics and chemistry, literature, history, physiology and medicine; but the peace prize has to do with the most fundamental and universal interests of humanity in all countries, and in all its ranks and classes, and this accounts largely for the wider interest which it awakens. Whoever proves to be worthy to receive this prize is, in the present condition of the nations, armed to the breaking point and weighted down by the burdens of militarism, rightly considered a benefactor of all men everywhere.

One word more. The Nobel Peace Prize Committee, now organized as the Nobel Institute, with its excellent new building constructed at a cost of \$70,000, is destined to be hereafter one of the most